DISHRAG

30¢ where sold

Foburary '98

"MY MUM ALWAYS SAID I'D GROW UP TO BE A DIRTY LITTLE SCRUBBER...."

CONTENTS

DISHWASHER PETE'S ODESSEY- DISHES IN THE US
CLEANING UP THE WEB - KITCHEN WORKERS ON THE 'NET
WHITE SLAVERY- KITCHENS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY
BOOKS ABOUT US - DISHPIGING ROUND THE WORLD
AND SO MUCH MORE- WELL, NOT MUCH MORE, TO BE HONEST

This fine publication was brought to you by the **DISHPIGS**. We are a secret terrorist group that went AWOL from society and set up a sparklingly clean utopia. In our utopia the floors are so clean people *do* eat off them, everyone washes their own plates nad customers compliment us on the crockery. No 'little nasties' are tolerated.

Back in the land of the living.....Dishpigs are a group of kitchenhands and dishwashers that work in Melbourne . We find each other work, work colectively in workplaces where there is more than one dishpig...from as little as listening out for critisims of others work so they can anticipate hassles to dealing with changing pay and conditions. For us, as well, we produce this mag to get our experiences out, have socials (this issue is out for the picnic on the the 15 Feb) and have a laugh at a job that is hard and dirty.

To contact us, to get the Dishrag sent (stamp and 20c) or to send in contributions...cartoons, anecdotes, jokes, whinges, book extracts, info, anything...;

PO Box 383
Brunswick
Melbourne 3056
Vic Aus

dishwashers in the news

Restaurant employee stabbed by co-worker

UPTOWN — An employee of Hob Nob Hill restaurant was stabbed twice in the back during a fight with another worker Wednesday afternoon, police said.

Police said Jose Rivas, a busboy, was stabbed by Gaston Vivas, a dishwasher, who pulled a knife at the restaurant on First Avenue near Juniper Street about 4:35 p.m.

Rivas was sent home after being treated at a hospital for superficial wounds. Police were still seeking Vivas, who ran from the business, for questioning.

Dishwasher executed — for peeing on Fidel Castro's dinner!

HAVANA — Justice was swift and deadly for Alfredo Castaneda, a dishwasher in the palace of Fidel Castro, after he was caught urinating on the Cuban dictator's food.

"A kitchen supervisor walked in and found the man defiling El Jefe's hamburger dinner," a palace spokesman said.

"The culprit immediately ran from the kitchen through a rear door and escaped out the back."

When informed of the stomach-turning prank, an outraged Castro sent troops to search for Castaneda.

Less than an hour later, a soldier spotted the 30-year-old man on a street two miles from the palace and put three bullets into his brain.

"The young soldier will no doubt receive a medal for his heroic service to El Jefe," the palace spokesman said.

PEEVED DICTATOR: Castro sent troops after the man who urinated on his hamburger dinner.

50

A CLEAN KITCHEN IS A PHONE CALL AWAY

Up to now, finding a kitchenhand has always a tricky process: you have to ask your friends and contacts if they know anyone who wants a job and can do the work, or you have to spend time and money advertising for and interviewing potential employees.

Now you can say goodbye to all that. Dish Pigs do the work for you: they find the people, they make sure they know what they are doing, and they check up on them periodically to make sure that you are happy and that everything is working out smoothly.

So, if you need a Dish Pig, give us a holler.

DISH PIGS
PO Box 383, Brunswick VIC 3057

one guy...
fifty states...
lots of dishes...
plenty of time...

new york city

At the Port Authority bus station, a pick-pocket welcomed me to New York City. I was flattered even if he did mistake the book in my coat pocket for a wallet. I thought he would have liked the book, Tom Kromer's Waiting For Nothing, but he chose to leave it in my pocket. Nevertheless, I felt welcomed.

When my dad first arrived in the United States, he stepped off the boat in New York and spent three days casually exploring the city. Eventually he walked the streets every day for six weeks looking for work. Stepping out of the bus station, I walked the streets of New York in search of a job. [redacted] like a young Burt Reynolds who came to N.Y. and washed dishes as a first step toward fulfilling his dream of starring in one good film and a string of crummy ones, I hoped to get a dishwashing job myself as a first step toward fulfilling my dream of, well, washing dishes in New York City.

I walked in search of a "Dishwasher Wanted" sign. I walked all day, every day. I walked until my feet bled (bad timing for breaking in new shoes). I often forgot I was looking for a job. Only one thing was missing in my wanderings: a connection to the tens of thousands of dishwashers who worked in the city. There was no easy backdoor access to say howdy to fellow dishwashers because the one thing N.Y. has a shortage of is back alleys.

Are rich dishwashers a threat to way of life?

I see that the directors of Forward Wisconsin, an agency chartered "to woo business to the state," are worried about our severe labor shortage and its concomitant wage increases.

It's about time somebody took action! Robert Goldman, research director for the Wisconsin Restaurant Association, says it is now possible "for a dishwasher to command $7 an hour, which used to be a skilled cook's wages."

This just confirms what we all know already. Every summer these affluent dishwashers zip around the lakes in their yachts, their gold jewelry glinting in the sun, voluptuous rich waitresses at their sides. And every winter they show up for work in their stretch limos, wearing slouch hats and Countess Mara ties. Where will it all end?

I say it's a disgrace for these people to command more than $12,000 a year and live like kings. I hope the restaurant owners take their cue from the baseball club owners and stand firm against any more increases. Remember, Wisconsin is one of the largest producers of paper plates in the nation, and we can hold out for a very long time.

— Elmer S. Cowhig, Madison

from a "Letters to the Editor" section

DIRTY DISHES

I'VE SEEN MY SHARE
OF SAD & TERRIBLE THINGS
ON AND AROUND THIS WORLD
WHILST I MADE MY TRIP HERE
AND THE SADDEST
AND THE WORST THING
WHICH I'VE SO FAR SIGHTED
OR SEEN
WAS A SINK PILED UP FULL
OF OLD DIRTY DISHES
AFTER ALL OF THE DIPTIERS HAD GONE
TO LEAVE
THEIR LIPSTICK
AND THEIR HANDYMARKS
ON THE SINK FULL OF DIRTY DISHES
AND THE ONLY REAL GENIUS
OR THE ONLY WORKER
THE ONLY ARTIST
WORTH HIS OR HER FOOD AND SALTBLOCK
IS THE ONE
BIG OR LITTLE
THAT JUMPS INTO THAT SINK FULL
OF DIRTY DISHES
AND GETS THEM ALL PRETTY & SHINYOR
BY THE TIME THE SUN COMES IN
TO SHINE ON THEM.

SOCIALISM IS GOING TO DO AWAY
WITH SINKS PILED FULL OF VISITORS
THAT GO OFF HOME
AND LEAVE YOU NOTHING BUT
A HEADACHE & A HEARTACHE TO
GREET THE MORNING WITH.

OF THIS I'M SURE.

WOODY GUTHRIE
Coney Islande
May 16th. 1949

Dishwasher Pete as he is called has a dream.....to wash dishes in all 50 US states. He's done 14, at last count. The next 2 pages contain bits from "dishwasher" #14. If you like it.....its $1

PO Box 8213
Portland
Oregan USA

the wonderful horrible life of Ed

11:30 P.M. - DISHROOM AT LE PEPE'S BISTRO
I MEAN, OVERALL, THIS A PRETTY DECENT JOB, RIGHT?
PRETTY DECENT JOB...
DECENT JOB...
DECENT?
HMMMM...
LOOK, PAL, I'VE SEEN KIDS LIKE YOU COME AND GO. YOU START OFF DOIN' A BANG-UP JOB...
YOU DO YER LITTLE PUPPET DANCE FER CHEF BOYARDEE BACK THERE, YOU MIGHT START FLIRTING WITH A WAITRESS OR TWO...
OR IN YER CASE, A WAITER, WHO'S TO SAY - IT'S NOT MY BUSINESS. IT'LL BE LIKE YER OWN LITTLE PARTY...
NEXT THING YA KNOW, YER SPEAKIN' GIBBERISH, WETTIN' YER PANTS, AND NOBODY SEES OR HEARS FROM YOU AGAIN!!!
I'M THE EYES AN' EARS OF THIS DUMP - THE BACKBONE - THE CORNERSTONE - A PILLAR - O-O-OLD RELIABLE.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED HERE, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING.
ABOUT FOUR WEEKS NOW.

BY EDWARD WALDRON

Q: What is your idea of a good job? For a boy your age?
A: Wash dishin' machine.
Q: Say what?
A: Wash dishin' machine.
Q: Anything else?
A: No.
Q: Why is this a good job?
A: Because it's what I figure I can get.

Q = Sociologist in 1959
A = New York teenager

For an issue of Dishwasher, which chronicles my quest to wash dishes in all fifty states, send $1.00 to:

Dishwasher
POBox 8213
Portland OR
97207

(For Dishwasher T-shirts, send $5.00)

This is an extract from book I found at the back of a dusty basement secondhand shop in a backstreet of collingwood, that I cant seem to find again... its called " Travels by Water " by Egbert Baker-Bailey

It's a personal account of a man who visted over 80 countries, using his kitchen hand skills to experience,enjoy and survive them all.

As I disembarked from the "Lady Luck" in a small town in Puerto Rico, I shuddered slightly and thanked the stars for my survival on that misnamed vessel. I made my way to the centre of town and chose the restaurant that was clearly the most upmarket, went round the back and made my pitch. No luck, however I was directed to the "La Comida Viva ". There I did find the work I was seeking, in fact starting that very night, as it appeared thier previous kitchenhand refused to finish this weeks work, despite her pay being witheld

I had little time to find lodgings but my luck held and I found central, clean and cheap digs. I dumped my meagre possesions there and siezing my white shirt and thick apron, hurried to the restaurant by the agreed starting time. I was confronted by a tall tottering pile of pots, pans and utensils, but few plates or bowls for service. Here goes, I thought as I plunged myelf into the washing , wiping, cleaning and organising that is a kitchenhands lot. I made fair progress and, I think, impressed the head chef Giorgios as I had worked so fast. I work fast, I hasten to add, for my own feeling of achievement, it is a long time since I worked in a kitchen where I did work hard for the others above me (or those that think they are, like 2nd chefs who earn no more but put on the airs of a duke), and that was in Spain back in '37 when I happened to blow in during the Revolution and stayed as the benefits of working in those collectivised cafes were tremendous, as I related in an earlier chapter.

As I gained control over my section, I had more time to observe the cooking. The speciality of this place was that customers selected they're own food from tanks landscaped like seabeds or land as was appropriate. The living foods included: oysters, mussels, octopi, squid, 8 types of fish, snails, frogs, rabbits, hens, piglets and even one, unappetising, turkey. Once chosen the customers returned to the tables to sip beer and wine, stylishly, whilst the flopping, sqwuaking or grunting livestock was killed, cleaned and cooked (or cooked alive if approprate) Over the night the kitchen degenerated from a hygenic controlled environment to one besplattered with blood, entrails, feathers and fur and the tempers of Giorgios and the two other chefs became fouler too.

It turned out that this night, a Friday, normally the busiest, was worse than usual tonight as another place in this town had shut for refurbishment, which in a place that only supported four restaurants proper made a major impact on "La Comida Viva" During a two miniute break I gathered from the second chef that the turnover here of chefs and kitchenhands was incredible, an average of one worker left each fortnight. Giorgios was the only one to last here, in the kitchen, for more than three months. I immediatly resolved to ask for more money after my first week, as I confidently felt my experience, especially that gained in the kitchens of southern Abyssina amongst the A'su'cctut people, where local fauna was prepeared in uniquly, bloody, traditional ways

Around 10pm the worst wave yet hit us, so much had been chosen from the holding tanks that one party of eight had to take the poor feather-bare turkey. Plates began to run out, space had long run out and as the turkey came in Giorgios called for eight twelves (the 12 inch flat rimmed plates used for white meats) as ill luck would have it a waitress, that to be honest I was rather taken with, asked for one as a couple on table 5 wished to share. I had eight. I gave one to the waitress. And seven to Giorgios. An almost fatal mistake as Giorgios yelled (in Spanish) " Me! I am head chef, I come first, you are less than me. you are an animal. I kill animal." He picked up an eight inch long gutting knife and swung.

They say fear gives you speed you never thought possible, and now I too say that, as, quick as a flash I swung my soddon dishcloth, catching his eyes with the end, temporarily blinding him. I ducked under his left arm and headed out to the cool backyard. I paused for a moment collecting my breath, and I must admit Iwas shaking with the adrenalin and shock. Giorgios followed, with the knife in his left, and the turrkey in his right hands. He flung the bird at my head , I turned to protect my eyes and run. I felt a searing pain down my left side, the turkey flapped and gobbled off toward the edge of town. I turned to see Giorgios raising the knife to strike again, I swung my fist, and missed. But Giorgios still fell, turning a little towards his left. He landed on his front, with a grunt as if all air was forced out of his lungs. I looked down and saw a frying pan clasped in my hand, with the fear and shock I had held onto it without realising. I must have caught him with the edge, enough to make him miss me and to sink the knife in his stomach I looked at Giorgios, a dead man in a pool of blood. Gutted by his own knife.

I had to stay the next day to explain all to the local constabulary, the testimonies of my fellow workers helped. I left town on Sunday on the back of a truck delivering turkeys to the capital, and as I relate in next chapter had an interesting, and this time rewarding time there

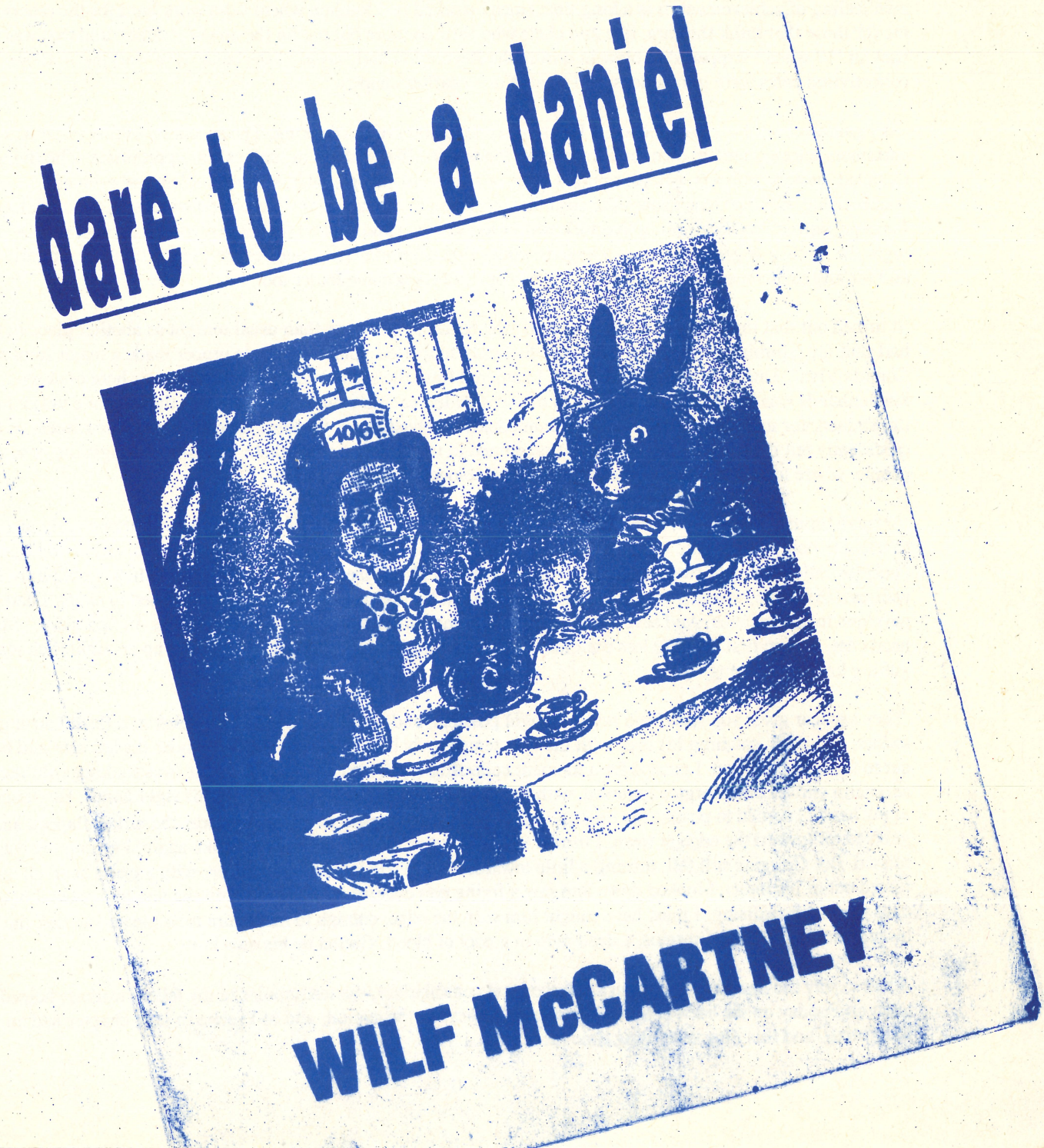
Dare To Be A Daniel W McCartney

This small (28pp) booklet tells of the activities and experiences of Wilf, who entered the catering trade at 12 in 1889, and stayed for.40 years He lived through exciting and tough times.The conditions of workers were atrotious. He became active in unions, syndicates and individual actions to fight the "white slavery" conditions, in the restaurants of London. Its well worth reading, both because it is an insight into how our industry was run in the times of 7 year apprenticeships, clear class stuctures and mass unemployment. I was surprised at the similarities to today, more than the differances. The industry attracted lots of immigrants (many from France, Germany, Italy and Holland, but also a few Chinese and Indians), had clear definitions of jobs, and had little Trade Union support.

This is a fascinating book, a bit like H.G. Wells or Conan Doyle in telling of what seems a far off age of servants, rich aristos and 19th Century technology, but this time I could easily identify with the main characters

Available from; New International Bookshop
54 Victoria St (cnr Lygon)
Open 10am Mon-Sat

Jura Books
440 Paramatta Rd
Petersham
NSW 2049



MUSIC REVIEW

dishwasher

clean

dirty

THE HI-FIVES

THE QUEERS

SCARED OF CHAKA

TEN-FOUR

MUSIC TO WASH DISHES BY - VOLUME I

This 4-band ep was given to me by a fellow dishpig. It is a good accompianyment to washing dishes. surrounded by this fast but bouncy set of songs which chronocle our lives. Constantly passed over by mainstream musc, our dihwasher hopes .. (a new sponge , oh thank you boss you really *do* care) and fears...(not the torn apron, mother of god, nooooooooo), finally are given voice. Perhaps the best part for me is this incontrovertable piece of proof that your average dish washing, floor mopping , wall polishing kitchen hand *is* more musical than your tunelessly whistling, rock loving chef.

or is this just my life.....

Vom London

For a copy of this record, send $3.00 to:

702 Records
POBox 204
Reno NV
89504

(Also, for a price listing on low-cost, high-quality vinyl stickers for all your needs, send a S.A.S.E.)

These are two extracts from the 12 page booklet that comes with the record

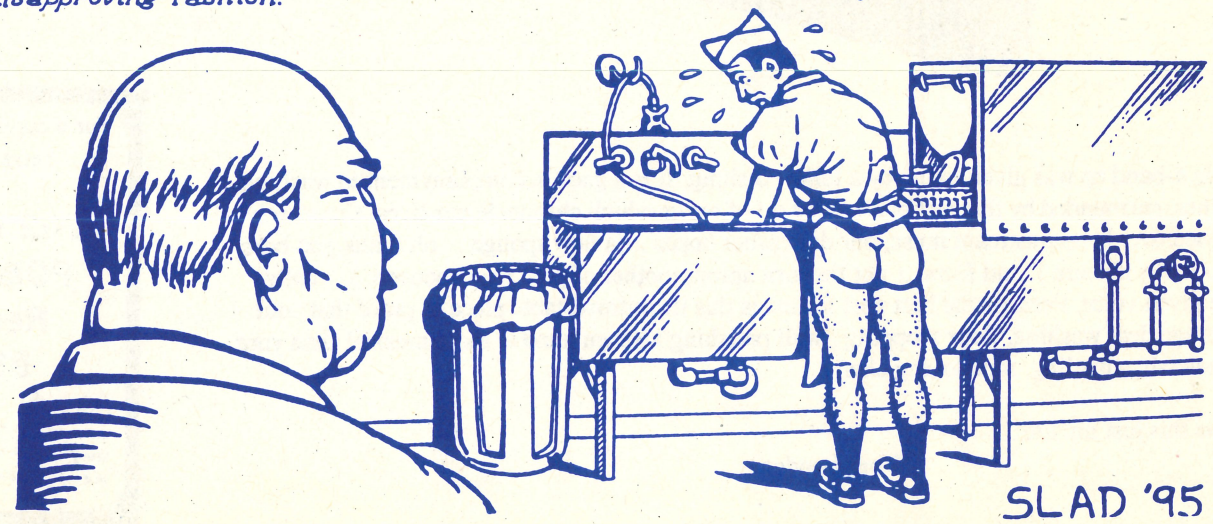
My Life as a Pearl Diver
by Joe King (of The Queers)

My first job a dishwasher was at the beach. I canned $1.10 an hour for a bunch of asshole Italians with big mouths and a disgusting propensity for eating pepperoni, onion, and olive oil sandwiches at 10:00 a.m. and then yelling orders at us dishwashers about two inches from our faces. Obnoxious assholes who shouldn't have been trusted with a paper route much less a restaurant. Anyway I stuck around there for a few years - just summers - til I was finally bullied into working the fry-o-la-ton. The one high point was when Mrs. DeCola was looking for food to stuff her fat face. They were too cheap to buy commercial refrigerators so we had (literally) six or seven home refrigerators on this porch section of the kitchen. None of them were grounded properly. She opened one and then with her hand on the first one, opened the one next to it. I was the only one in the kitchen - probably thinking about smoking pot or jerking off or something equally important - when I heard this little song. It went *"AAHHH---"* Anyway about the time I started to tap my beer I realized she was getting electrocuted. She couldn't move her hands but she was jumping lightly, up and down, on each foot. I quickly came out of my reverie and ran over and with my foot lifted her left hand off the door handle. She fell straight down on her fat ass and sat there going *"OH, OH."* So for a week or two everybody said I saved her life and they didn't give me so much shit. But still I didn't get a raise.

COMMON DISHWASHER PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM: *You always arrive at work on time, you're courteous to your co-workers, and you perform your duties in an enthusiastic & professional manner— yet your boss seems to spend an inordinate amount of time glaring at you in a disapproving fashion.*

SOLUTION: *Oftentimes the problem is nothing more than a simple dress code infraction. Check the restaurant's employee dress policy to make sure you're in compliance.*



Kitchens on The Web

The web is open for all. Open to all that have adequate technology and a net account. well, through some mates I do . I only used it the other day, and being a proud kitchenhand avoided searching for naughty pics and instead found this. The stories gave me a laugh. The address of this page was through; http;//www.iww.org. There was a link to an Aussie page, but seeing as it had no restaurant stuff, Ididn't download (see how casually I threw in a word I only understood last week !) any. Oh, by the way, don't try any of this at home kids.....

Industrial Union #640/IWW

Hotel, Restaurant and Building Service Workers Industrial Union

The Silver Platter

Welcome to the Silver Platter, a webzine for rebellious workers in the Hotel, Restaurant and Building Service Industries. This is sponsored by members of the IWW in Portland, Oregon. We are Restaurant workers and so this slants what we are able to write about. If you work in any job that is covered by IU 640, your imput is more than welcome- its encouraged!

What's it all about? We want this to become a place where workers can exchange stories about what you've done to better your position at work. If we talk about the power we have as workers, the more able we will be to use our power to get better wages and working conditions. Our bosses need us, we need each other, but we don't need the boss very much.

Let's make it more so.

Postings on May 10, 1997

- Our Tactics for Organizing in the Restaurant Industry
- Help Yourselves- Help the Silver Platter!
- Why Should We Save the Bosses from Themselves?
- Sam Dolgoff on IWW Restaurant organizing in the '20s
- Revenge Plus A true tale of Restaurant Rebellion

"The direct action tactics of the IWW (were often clever and even amusing)... IWW strikers got quick results organizing the staff from the inside. Wobblies whom the employer did not know, hired out as "strikebreakers". No sooner did the "strikebreakers" begin to serve lunch than strange "accidents" began to happen: a waiter "accidently spilled a bowl of soup on a tablecloth, hamburgers were "mistakenly" fried in fish oil, coffee was flavored with soap suds, sugar dispensers were packed with salt, full meals were marked on the tab as coffee and cake, etc. The "strikebreakers" were fired immediately after lunch and the victorious strikers returned."

-Sam Dolgoff from "Fragments"

Revenge Plus!

In a tavern where I worked, the owners' wife came in one Friday night, apparently with the idea of helping out. She was howling drunk and was no help at all, but always in the way.The waitress on the floor was doing a good job without help. She was a very good waitress, much loved by our beery customers, sort of a brassy type that took no shit from nobody and was consistently funny in her responses and her ways of keeping the customers in line. The boss's wife was not much of a waiter at her best and as the evening wore on, and as we worked around her and politely ignored her, she became more angry and more jealous of this popular, competent waitress.

The end result was the boss's wife finally exploded, had a screaming fit, and fired the waitress right on the floor in the middle of a busy Friday night crowd. We hoped the boss would straighten out the following day, but he didn't.

The waitress was understandably furious, and called me up for advice. She had decided to take out the front windows, simple revenge, but asked if I had any other ideas. I suggested that she could get a harsher revenge more safely, and do the rest of us who were still there a favor at the same time by ratting the place off to every possible agency that inspects bars and restaurants. I was primarily thinking about the unsafe basement stair we all fell down, the dysfunctional fire exit, but there were other things. There always are. And the workers always know about them. the upshot was that she made a few anonymous phone calls and the inspectors came rolling in. She didn't get her job back, but she didn't want it back. The back stairs got fixed and, the fire exit got fixed, along with many thousands of dollars worth of other improvements. She got her revenge and the owners got a large financial rebuke.

The next Friday and Saturday, we ran an unadvertised special. Anyone who asked where the waitress was and why she wasn't there got to drink free all night. The beer really flowed. Nobody ever got in trouble over this incident. It was never mentioned, and we didn't see the boss's wife again for about a year. I felt some qualms about suggesting the use of these Governmental agencies, but they were tools at hand.

Are you a waiter, maid, dishwasher, janitor or cook?

Are you tired of the crap you have to put up with?

Do you want to get more of the good things in life?

JOIN US!

What you can do...

- **We need your stories** of work place rebellion e-mail them to us here. We don't need your name, just the story...
- **Use the information** you find on this page to **practice Direct Action** on the job. Visit our **Organizing Page** for ideas.
- **Subscribe to our e-mail list** Just write subscribe in the subject field

My Day at work Sat 22 Nov 1997

Hot steam, bent back, sweat dripping down my face..driping salty in my mouth and splashing into the soupy water. Floating leaves of lettuce and bread crumbs; plates coming out and through rinse water, once cold and clean, now tepid and greasy. Hysterical shouts for spoons, pans, square plates,bowls, terracottas.

Headache now, drinking lemonade , it's too cold and catch's in my chest; 6 hours on my feet, 4 more to go, I can feel the heat of the gas jets in my back, how bloody hot in here is it ?

Then in pops a tanned, relaxed face through the hatch, " It's a scorching day outside, hottest this summer" she says " I think i'll head down the beach'..... not after I strangle you I think bitterly, just before i'm blinded by my own sweat and accidently pour a panful of disgusting water down my front of my apron.

VOM